CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

CD/1310
CD/NTB/WP.236
7 April 1995

Original: ENGLISH

LETTER DATED 7 APRIL 1995 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF INDIA ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT TRANSMITTING THE TEXT OF THE STATEMENT OF THE GROUP OF 21 ON THE CTBT NEGOTIATIONS

In my capacity as Coordinator of the Group of 21 on agenda item "Nuclear Test Ban" I have the pleasure in submitting herewith a Group of 21 Working Paper entitled "Statement of the Group of 21 on the CTBT negotiations".

I would be grateful if this Working Paper could be distributed as an official document of the Conference on Disarmament as well as a Working Paper of the Ad Hoc Committee on Nuclear Test Ban.

(Signed): Satish Chandra

GE.95-61143 (E)

Statement of the Group of 21 on the CTBT negotiations

The Group of 21 reiterates its earlier call upon all members of the Conference on Disarmament, in particular, the Nuclear Weapon States, for an early conclusion of Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) in 1995, made in CD/1292.

In this context, the Group of 21 notes with disappointment the stand taken by some Nuclear Weapon States on the fundamental article on "Scope" in the rolling text - CD/1273/Rev.1. Their continued support to "exceptions" to nuclear tests has resulted in little progress on this fundamental article. It raises the question about their commitment to the CTBT and goes against the mandate of the Ad Hoc Committee on NTB. Furthermore, elaborating too vast a verification network also raises serious doubts about the direction and purpose of the present negotiations. It is obvious that the verification of a future CTBT should be determined by the purpose, scope and nature of the Treaty.

On the Scope of a CTBT, the Group of 21 had made it clear that the CTBT should be for complete cessation of nuclear tests by all States in all environments and for all times. The ban should be comprehensive and no tests should be carried out under any pretext for any reason or justification.

The G-21 is studying the contribution of the International Monitoring System (IMS) Expert Group presented in WP.224/225 as it is a valuable input for the negotiations. The G-21 has also noted the key political and technical issues raised by the Expert Group. The G-21 feels that the vast technical material already prepared by the experts on this subject in the past two years is a sufficient basis for delegations to take political decisions. The Group, therefore, feels that given the slow pace of the negotiations in Working Group 1, there does not appear to be much merit in holding more expert sessions. The experts could be a part of their national delegations. The time has now come to take political decisions in order to achieve progress in textual form in the rolling text.

The Group had made it clear in its earlier Working Papers that the verification system under the future CTBT should be cost-effective. The cost of the organization's activities including verification should be borne by the States Parties in accordance with the United Nations scale of assessments adjusted to take into account differences in membership between the United Nations and the organization of a CTBT. Like the entire Treaty, the verification system should be universal in its application, non-discriminatory in character and guarantee equal access to all States. Therefore, in view of the elaborate IMS system being proposed, the Group does not agree with the emphasis placed by some delegations on their "National Technical Means" to judge an ambiguous event. Hence, the Group reiterates its earlier position in CD/1266 that the Technical Secretariat should have the capacity and the responsibility of analysing the data received from the IMS. The organization should be responsible for judgement in this regard. Therefore, the organization of a future CTBT should exchange and analyse all IMS and On-Site Inspection (OSI) data with this aim.

It is the Group's hope that the CTBT should be able to attract universal adherence. The Entry into Force (EIF) should not be complicated to delay the process. EIF made contingent upon ratification by the Nuclear Weapon States would make the CTBT hostage to them as well as a discriminatory treaty. The expansion of CD membership should also not be utilized as a pretext to delay the EIF.

In conclusion, the Group is concerned about the slow pace of the negotiations so far. The Group hopes that the pace of negotiations will be accelerated by an exhibition of political will by all States, in particular the Nuclear Weapon States, especially on the "Scope", so that a CTBT can be concluded in 1995.